

Message Text

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16

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-01

INR-07 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-02

SS-15 USIA-06 ACDA-05 IO-10 OES-03 FEA-01 EA-06 AID-05

EB-07 TRSE-00 /104 W

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FM AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

TO SECSTATE WASH DC 8165

INFO AMEMBASSY ANKARA

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

AMCONGEN KARACHI

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, MNUC, MARR, PK, US

SUBJECT: PRIME MINISTER BHUTTO ON ARMS POLICY

REF: ISLAMABAD 11847 (NOTAL)

1. PRIME MINISTER BHUTTO LAST WEEK GAVE FIRST INTERVIEW TO FOREIGN PRESS ASSOCIATION IN RAWALPINDI, TEXT OF WHICH PUBLISHED IN PAKISTAN TIMES DECEMBER 27. INTERVIEW, DEVOTED TO SEVERAL ASPECTS OF PAKISTAN'S DOMESTIC AND FOREIGN POLICY, DEALT HEAVILY WITH ARMS POLICY. EMBASSY CONSIDERS AS SIGNIFICANT FOLLOWING ITEMS ON ISSUE OF ARMS POLICY. OTHER FOREIGN POLICY ELEMENTS WILL BE REPORTED SEPTEL.

2. QUESTION OF PAKISTAN'S NUCLEAR INTENTIONS SHOULD IT NOT GET CONVENTIONAL WEAPONS AGAIN RAISED. AS AT EARLIER PRESS
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CONFERENCE (REPORTED REFTTEL), BHUTTO SAID THAT, IF

REQUIRED TO MEET PAKISTAN'S SECURITY NEEDS, HE WOULD MAKE DECISION TO GO NUCLEAR. HOWEVER, HIS LATER STATEMENT IS MORE QUALIFIED, ONLY "IF OUR BACKS ARE TO THE WALL AND WE HAVE ABSOLUTELY NO OPTION" WOULD HE SO DECIDE, PRESS QUOTES HIM AS SAYING. AT EARLIER PRESS INTERVIEW, IMPRESSION CONVEYED THAT NUCLEAR DECISION DIRECTLY LINKED TO AMERICAN ARMS EMBARGO. BHUTTO, IT APPEARS, TRIED TO DISPEL THIS IMPRESSION AMONG FOREIGN PRESS BY CITING SEVERAL PRESENT OR POTENTIAL SOURCES OF ARMS OR ARMS MONEY: US, WHO HE SAID ARE UNDER TREATY OBLIGATION TO PROVIDE ARMS; FRIENDLY COUNTRIES (ARABS/IRAN?) WHO MIGHT MUSTER FINANCIAL RESOURCES; ONE GREAT POWER (CHINA) WITH WHO ALREADY HAVE MILITARY COLLABORATION; UK; AND "SOME" EUROPEAN COUNTRIES (FRANCE?); OTHER GREAT POWERS (USSR?) FOR WHOM DOOR MIGHT BE OPENED IN FUTURE. ONLY BE NOW SEEMS TO BE SAYING, IF ADEQUATE SUPPLY OF CONVENTIONAL ARMS NOT FORTHCOMING FROM ANY POTENTIAL SOURCE AND IF DISPARITY OF CONVENTIONAL ARMS WITH INDIA INCREASES SO THAT IT THREATENS STABILITY OF SUBCONTINENT WOULD PAKS BE FORCED TO GO NUCLEAR.

3. IN MEANTIME, PAKISTAN'S NUCLEAR PROGRAM FOR PEACEFUL PURPOSES HAS UNDOUBTEDLY BEEN ACCELERATED, BHUTTO TOLD QUESTIONER, BUT, HE SAID, WE ARE NOT GOING AHEAD WITH A "PROGRAM FOR A NUCLEAR DEVICE." INDIAN ATOMIC EXPLOSION WAS REALLY FOR MILITARY PURPOSES, HE CHARGED, BUT "WE ARE NOT GOING IN THAT DIRECTION." IN RESPONSE TO QUESTION "WOULD ENEMIES GIVE PAKISTAN TIME TO GO NUCLEAR IN CASE OF NEED?" PRIMIN EXPLAINED STEPS GOP HAD TAKEN TO PROMOTE BETTER SUB-CONTINENTAL RELATIONS, THUS SEEMING TO IMPLY THAT IMPROVED RELATIONS LESSENED NEED FOR ATOMIC DETERRENT AND THAT TIME NOT A CRITICAL FACTOR. BHUTTO DID CAUTION, HOWEVER, THAT BETTER RELATIONS COULD NOT COME THROUGH "TOTAL SECURITY OF INDIA AND TOTAL INSECURITY OF PAKISTAN," "THIS NOT OUR INTERPRETATION OF ACHIEVING PEACE," HE ASSERTED.

4. PAKISTAN'S CONTINUED MEMBERSHIP IN CENTO, PRIMIN IMPLIED, IS RELATED TO US ARMS EMBARGO. IT BENEATH PAK DIGNITY TO TIE SUCH SPECIFICS OF CENTO AS PARTICIPATION IN RECENT MIDLINK EXERCISE OR REPRESENTATION IN FORTHCOMING MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE TO US EMBARGO, HE COMMENTED, BUT "FUNDAMENTAL ISSUE IS THAT OUR MEMBERSHIP IN CENTO IS CERTAINLY RELATED LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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TO EMBARGO."

5. DISMISSING THEM AS PREMATURE, BHUTTO WOULD NOT ANSWER QUESTIONS REGARDING POSSIBILITY OF NEW DEVELOPMENTS IN ARMS DEALS WITH US, OR HOW HARD HE WOULD BE PRESSING FOR LIFTING ARMS EMBARGO ON FORTHCOMING TRIP TO US. TRIP DATE, TOO, HE WOULD NOT DISCUSS AS NO OFFICIAL ANNOUNCEMENT YET MADE ON SUBJECT. NOR WOULD BHUTTO, WHEN ASKED HOW LONG PAKISTAN

COULD WAIT FOR "CHANGE OF HEART IN AMERICA" REGARDING ARMS EMBARGO, GIVE ANY DEADLINE DATE FOR RESUMPTION OF ARMS SUPPLY.

6. PAKISTAN REQUIRES DEFENSIVE WEAPONS FOR ALL THREE SERVICES, LEADER SAID, TYPES OF WHICH ARE WELL KNOWN AND THUS DO NOT NEED TO BE DETAILED. ACQUISITION OF WEAPONS FOR DEFENSE, BHUTTO ASSERTED, WILL SHOW PAK SINCERITY FOR PROMOTION OF PEACE AND DEMONSTRATE THAT PAKS HAVE NO AGGRESSIVE INTENT TOWARD ANY OTHER COUNTRY.

8. BHUTTO HELD OUT POSSIBILITY HE MAY GO TO FRANCE EARLY NEXT YEAR, PRESUMABLY TO DISCUSS ARMS. IN RESPONSE TO QUESTION, HE CITED FRANCE AS ONLY WEST EUROPEAN NATION WHO DID NOT BIDE BY US LED SOUTH ASIA ARMS EMBARGO, SAID (ARMS) RELATIONSHIP WITH FRANCE WOULD CONTINUE WHETHER EMBARGO LIFTED OR NOT, AND ADMITTED THAT "THERE IS SOME DISCUSSION OF MY VISIT THERE NEXT YEAR."

9. TEXT OF PAKISTAN TIMES ARTICLE REPORTING INTERVIEW BEING POUCHED ADDRESSEES.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: ARMS, NUCLEAR WEAPONS, PRESS CONFERENCES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 28 DEC 1974
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: MorefiRH
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974ISLAMA12001
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D740376-0639
From: ISLAMABAD
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t1974126/aaaaaeyq.tel
Line Count: 136
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 74 ISLAMABAD 11847
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: MorefiRH
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 07 MAY 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <07 MAY 2002 by boyleja>; APPROVED <30 DEC 2002 by MorefiRH>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: PRIME MINISTER BHUTTO ON ARMS POLICY
TAGS: PFOR, MNUC, MARR, PK, US, (BHUTTO, ALI)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005